







## EXTRACTS.

## A NUTSHELL NOVEL FOR A MINIATURE MUDIE.

VOL. I.  
A winning wile,  
A sunny smile,  
A feather,  
A tiny talk,  
A pleasant walk,  
Together!

VOL. 2.  
A little doubt,  
A playful bout,  
Capricious:  
A merry mire,  
A stolen kiss,  
Delicious!

VOL. 3.  
You ask mamma,  
Consult papa,  
With pleasure,  
And both repeat,  
The rash event,  
At leisure!!

J. ASHLER-SMUR.

**LA BOXE.**  
"The serious study of the low kick is recommended especially to those who are of a certain size, or of low stature, or who labour under other disadvantages of form, such as fat or heaviness." So observes M. Charlemagne in his "L'Art de la Boxe Francaise." A kinder advice to such persons would perhaps be to "keep out of it"; but even so it is worth while spending a little time in following up the observation. The low kick, when we find, is one of those most to be feared. It is easy, rapid, has great power, and astonishes the adversary; but it may be M. Charlemagne tells us, it breaks the shin-bone when well delivered.

French boxing is, says this "professor," now all a natural art of defense for which every resource of the body ought to be brought into play, assisted by the invention. Arms and legs, fist, feet, and hand are all used. In the straight-fight there are no rules. (A French crowd lacks the fine old English bout for "seeing fair play.") Each tries all he knows to beat the other, and the victory sets the means right. The English in their system of boxing have it is true brought the use of the arms and sets to perfection; but then they look on the legs and feet merely as a kind of springs to be used for advancing or retreating, or getting away from his blows. In the scuffle, on the other hand, the Parisian rough makes the leg and foot the chief weapon, using the hands only for defense. Charles Lebour, "the creator of French boxing, conceived the greatest project of combining the two, and produced that splendid Utopia, that supreme embodiment, French boxing. It is Duran the Elder that speaks in his "Files, Lorettes et Courtisanes." Lebour went to England "without telling them who he was," took lesson as an ordinary pupil from Swift and Adams, "the two first boxers in London." (Was it he or Dureus that tried a kick at Owen Swift—the hardest hitter of the light weights as he used to be called—and was promptly swung by the leg, according to a legend, out of the ring?)

The heyday of French boxing was between 1845 and 1855, when Lebour and his brother Hubert gave public exhibitions in Paris at the Circus and Lebouef of Rouen, whose real forte was singlestick, followed for several years in the Sale Montaigueneau, afterwards turned into a restaurant. Hubert Lebour's "English blow with the fist" was terrible, and his low kick tremendous. There was Dacros, a house-painter, who gave lessons in sparring in his evenings, and was the only Frenchman who could stand up to English pugilists. Once, to everybody's astonishment, it was a draw between him and the celebrated Cribby, who had settled down in Paris. What has "Fistiana" to say to this? Rambaud, a journeyman baker, was a public favourite until he was challenged and beaten by Vignerion, the man-canoe, whose height and colossal strength made him a formidable adversary, although he was awkward and wanted quickness. Charlemagne, a young soldier, was a pupil of his, and made his first appearance twenty years ago. Four years later he beat Hubert Lebour, and afterwards taught boxing and singlestick in many regiments of the French army. His master, Vignerion, having broken his back at Boulogne during the cannon trials, Charlemagne took his discharge and opened a gallery in the Latin Quarter of Paris. He now professes his noble art at Brussels, and he claims to have picked all that was best out of the methods of Lebour and Vignerion. As this new school is perfection, both the caudle and English boxing come in for hard knocks in this treatise. In the scuffle, we are instructed, the guard was very low, the legs wide apart, the hands forward and open; and the fighting consisted merely of the low kick and the parry by seizing the assailant's foot. Chest and flank kicks were unknown, and there was no nearer approach to a fist-blow than an under-swing with the open hand to the opponent's nose when he leant very much forward. This was called giving a "musetto." When the scuffle was part of a liberal education, fifty years ago, the professor most in vogue was one Michel Plessier, who taught the Duke of Orleans and Lord Seymour, Count d'Alton Shear in the "Mémoires du Vicomte d'Audrey" sketches him under the name of Caissier, as a man of about thirty-six, with a leaden-coloured face marked with small-pox, knotty fingers as hard as wood, and long bony limbs whose rapid loose motions recalled the arms of the old telegraphs. This man was the terror of the Courtille, as they used to call the northern faubourgs of Paris, full of pot-houses and bad characters, where the Toms and Jerrys of the day, both French and English, resorted to "see life."

As to our own system of fist-fights, we have it on the authority of Dumas that it is the *sardou* of England. Charlemagne says it is more a trial of endurance than a display of skill. There is no counting of hits; he who can take most blows generally the winner. But the professor stands so far as to give some of the rules for the benefit of such of his pupils as do not care to have their ribs knocked in; and a passage quite rare in its intensity tells us that since French boxing has been invented "the perfidious fist of perfidious Albion need no longer be feared." That which the sots of the *bœufs de Waterloo* could not formerly attain to, the foot—now—accomplishes—with a grace—an elegance, and a certainty which defy all comparison." Nor does this method trust to the feet alone; for the author warns his pupils that many English boxers lean so far back as to avoid blows that the forward leg has no grip of the ground. In that case all the French boxer has to do is to duck and lay hold of that leg with one hand, while with the other he hits out at the face or the ribs; or, better still, he can seize the leg with both hands, and beat the enemy in the stomach with his head. We learn also that we have a second and quite separate division of our muscular science which is called *bœuf spring*, in which padded gloves are worn; but the sport which truly national is "la boxe anglaise."

All the mysteries of "la boxe française" are exhibited in this treatise, in sixty-five very well-drawn figures accompanied by plain and intelligible descriptions. There are five chief kicks and three fist-blows. The first kick is the low kick already named, of which there are three variations: the first dealt without moving from the spot, the second being thrown back to give equilibrium and greater force; the second in advancing; and the third

in getting away. Next comes the kick at the ribs or body, which is called horizontal and semi-circular, because the kicker twists half round on his left foot as it is given. Of this there are also the three variations. The third is a higher kick at the chest, which is also accompanied by a half-turn inward. Then comes the high face kick, which every one cannot give, for it requires great agility and suppleness of limb. It is necessary, too, to get nearer for it; and its danger is that it throws the kicker off his balance, and he has to recover with great difficulty to get all safe. Then there is the back kick, in which, with a rapid half-turn to the right and a crossing of the feet, the blow is given sideways with the sole of the left foot. Lastly, there is the somewhat similar kick with the right foot, delivered by spinning the body quite round on the left foot, which requires a good balance and long practice. There are, of course, parries to all these. To avoid the low kick, the forward leg aimed at is either lifted or drawn back. Or there are the high stop-kicks at the body with the threatened leg, which are the counters recommended by the professor to fist-blows aimed at the face. The third sort of parry is stooping and picking up the kicking leg with the left hand, putting it hard-ward, letting go, and simultaneously delivering a fist-blow in the face, which is almost certain to obtain a knock-down. The horizontal kick is parried with a blow of the fist on the shin-bone near the knee, thus diverting the leg outwards; and at the same moment the defender must rush in and get well home with the fists. On the kicking foot, if the right, is seized inside with the left hand turned outwards. To escape from this grip it is only necessary to throw the body back, wheel sharply to the right, and draw back the leg. "The strongest hand and wrist are powerless to prevent this movement." But the seizure with the left hand as described should be followed up at once by clapping the right hand over the foot.

At the same time a vigorous kick should be administered to the calf of the remaining leg of the adversary. A fall is almost certain; but before there is time to give this kick the man whose leg is caught should shorten it violently, thus drawing himself towards his antagonist, and hammer away with the fist at his unguarded face and neck—finally using the improvised leg, if it still remain so, for a spasmodic kick in the body. This generally ends in liberation; but if all fails, he must throw himself rapidly on the ground on his hands, and with the free leg attack the opponent violently where he can. This is certain to succeed; but it leaves the defender on the ground in the second-best position, where there is no help but agility to get up and away.

Fist-blows are "an indispensable complement of French boxing," but there are only three: the straight hit at the face, guarded as with us; the blow at the ribs, which, vigorously dealt, "takes away the wind and is sufficient to knock a man out of time" (this is the blow for short men to employ); and the third is the horizontal semi-circular blow, which requires more skill than strength, given with a round inward swing of the right and "with the side of the fist" on the temple, ear, or lower jaw. This is said to be extremely formidable.

The best height and weight for French boxing are about 5 ft. 6 in. and 11 stone. Over these figures, there is less quickness but greater advantage in the attack. Smaller men are more rapid, and better fitted for defense. For a set-to in "la boxe française" buff-leather padded slippers are required, as well as the ordinary boxing-gloves.

St. James's Gazette.

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